

Resolution Concerning “The Jesus Family Tomb”

WHEREAS a recent documentary called “The Jesus Family Tomb” makes claims that contradict the clear teaching of Scripture. The claims are based on ossuaries (boxes that hold decomposed remains) discovered in 1980 in Talpiot (a suburb of Jerusalem) with various inscriptions on them. The inscribed names include, “Jesus, the son of Joseph,” “Maria,” “Mariamene,” “Mattia,” and “Judas.”

WHEREAS the documentary suggests that the tomb is the final resting place for Jesus, Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Judas (the son of Jesus and Mary Magdalene). The producers treat the subject as serious science based on archaeological evidence, DNA testing, and statistical analysis.

WHEREAS some liberal theologians claim that this discovery is irrelevant because Jesus' resurrection was spiritual, making it quite possible that the body of Jesus could be discovered at some point.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we the messengers of the churches in fellowship with the Nebraska Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting for our Spring Conference in Omaha, Nebraska, April 12-14, 2007, reaffirm our belief in the literal, physical, bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The tomb was empty (Matthew 28:6), and the resurrected Lord was seen by many witnesses (I Cor. 15:4-8).

We reject the sensational claims made by the producers of “The Jesus Family Tomb” for many reasons. These reasons include, but are certainly not limited to the following:

1. All of the inscribed names were common names found on many other ossuaries.
2. The DNA analysis does not prove any of the conclusions. All it proves is that “Jesus” and “Mariamene” (supposedly Mary Magdalene) were not blood related. Other DNA tests (which might conclusively contradict their conclusions) were not even done.
3. Statistical analysis also does not prove anything. The statistical results are only as good as the underlying assumptions. In this case, the assumption is that Jesus never rose from the dead.
4. Obvious historical inconsistencies are ignored. Why did a poor family from Nazareth have an expensive tomb near Jerusalem? Why does the inscription read “Jesus, the son of Joseph,” when that phrase was never used of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures?

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that we reject the theological compromise that spiritualizes the resurrection. Jesus specifically told the disciples that his resurrected body was not spirit, but was flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). We affirm with the Apostle Paul, that if Jesus' body is still in the tomb, then our faith is in vain, we are lost in our sins, and we are of all men most pitiable. (see I Cor. 15:17-19)